

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Previous research shows Medical Library Association award winner publication rate

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In the July 2010 issue of the *Journal of the Medical Library Association* (JMLA), Harvey and Wandersee reported they found no publication rate studies for the Medical Library Association (MLA) or other library science organizations [1]. We write to share prior research on the publication rate of award-winning MLA research presentations and posters published in April 2009 in *Hypothesis*, the open access journal of the MLA Research Section, which is indexed by CINAHL [2].

As cochairs of the Awards Committee of the MLA Research Section, we investigated the hypothesis that a high percentage of authors of papers and posters that received MLA Research Section awards had gone on to be published in the literature. Research Section award-winning papers and posters from 2000–2008 (n=62) were searched by 2 librarians in Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA), CINAHL, ERIC, and MEDLINE/PubMed, using authors and vari-

ous combinations of title keywords.

Twenty-three (37.0%) of the works were published—13 papers and 10 posters. Like Harvey and Wandersee's findings, JMLA (n=13) was most popular, followed by the *Journal of Hospital Librarianship* (n=2), and 4 were published in medical journals. Given the high-quality research nature of the work we studied, it is not surprising that the rate of publication for award winners was 10.0% higher than the publication rate of 27.6% found by Harvey et al. and closer to the 36.0% publication rate for pediatric rheumatology abstracts that they reported. This reinforces their point that research abstracts may have a higher publication rate than non-research abstracts.

The projects have methodological differences. They surveyed authors, which we did not. Our search of the literature included LISTA and ERIC, where we found articles published in journals such as *Information Research* and *Libri*. This confirms that the limitation they mentioned of not searching the library literature definitely results in an underestimation of the true publication rate. Regarding

the difference between their findings from 2002–2003 and ours for 2000–2008, we performed a subgroup analysis for the 11 award-winning abstracts from 2002–2003 and found 6 published for a rate of 54.5%, which falls within the Cochrane 30%–60% range that Harvey and Wandersee cited.

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